



The Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the parable of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition— inasmuch as we are sunken in sin and far from God and His Mysteries—we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them: and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the fore-courts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin—no matter how great it may be—that can overcome at any time His love for man. The only unforgivable sin is the sin for which no repentance has been offered to Christ.



The Resurrection Dismissal Hymn and Kontakion of the Tone of the Week
PLAGAL OF SECOND TONE

Dismissal Hymn

ANGELIC powers were above Thy tomb, and they that guarded Thee became as dead. And Mary stood by the grave looking for Thine immaculate Body. Thou hast despoiled Hades and wast not tried thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst grant us life. O Thou Who didst arise from the dead, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion

HAVING raised up all the dead out of the dark abysses by His life-bestowing hand, Christ God, the Giver of Life, hath bestowed the Resurrection upon mortal nature; for He is the Saviour and Resurrection and Life of all, and the God of all.

Kontakion of the Prodigal Son. Third Tone
On this day the Virgin

FOOLISHLY I sprang away * from Thy great fatherly glory, * and dispersed in wicked deeds * the riches that Thou didst give me, * With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: * I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. * But receive me in repentance; * make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

